



# PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

## In this issue

- Inaugural Keiran McNamara Scholarship awarded
- Official opening of The Gap
- 2016–17 Budget released
- Campers set to experience Yanchep
- Reconciliation Week 2016
- Wallabies journey from Wheatbelt to Kalbarri
- National symposium held in Perth
- Citizen scientists helping *Western Shield*
- Kimberley visitors thank staff
- New Conservation and Parks Commission
- Albany coast plan released for comment
- Nesting hollows installed for Carnaby's
- New partnership for Land for Wildlife



## Inaugural Keiran McNamara Scholarship awarded

**Above** Emily Lester (centre) caught up with Anne and Sarah McNamara (right) and Director of Science and Conservation Margaret Byrne (left) to celebrate the award. Photo – Matthew Galligan

A scholarship honouring former Director General and long-time staff member Keiran McNamara was awarded recently to Emily Lester, a marine biology student at The University of Western Australia.

Keiran McNamara was a longstanding senior staff member of the department and was Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management from 2001 to 2006 and Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation from 2006 until his untimely death in 2013. Keiran and his family, Anne, Peter, Sarah and Ian, made a very generous bequest to fund a PhD scholarship to undertake research to support management of World Heritage areas.

The scholarship is available to students from any Western Australian university for research work undertaken in the State's World Heritage areas. Emily

Lester, the first recipient, will be undertaking a PhD research project in Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area and Ningaloo Marine Park, under the supervision of Dr Tim Langlois, Professor Gary Kendrick and Dr Mark Meekan.

She will be investigating how the behaviour of reef fish and sharks can be used as an indicator of trophic relationships in coral reef ecosystems and as a measure of fishing pressure. Prior to taking up the scholarship, Emily was working with Parks and Wildlife Exmouth District and Marine Science Program staff to assess impacts on whale sharks at Ningaloo Marine Park using a large amount of data already collected.

Emily is excited to be undertaking her project with the scholarship.

"I am thrilled to be awarded this scholarship as it will

mean I can do so much more in my project," she said. "It was lovely to meet Mrs McNamara and Sarah, and hear about Keiran and his passion for conservation in WA."

Anne and Sarah McNamara were also keen to meet Emily. "I was delighted to meet Emily and hear of her plans for her PhD research," Anne said.

The selection committee of Tom Hatton (Environmental Protection Authority), Paul Hardisty (CSIRO), Margaret Byrne (Parks and Wildlife) and Anne and Sarah McNamara, were very pleased to award the inaugural scholarship.

Applications for the 2017 scholarship will open in September this year. The scholarship is a fitting tribute to Keiran's dedication to conservation of places of exceptional natural value in WA's environment.

Published by the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Public Information and Corporate Affairs Branch

**Editors** Mitzi Vance and Karla Graham

**Contributors** Heather Quinlan, Jennifer Eliot and Emma O'Leary

**Design and production** Lynne Whittle

**Telephone** (08) 9219 9000



**Email** pwn@dpaw.wa.gov.au



Department of  
Parks and Wildlife





## Official opening of The Gap

More than 60 Parks and Wildlife staff, local businesses operators, traditional owners and community members gathered this month for the official opening of The Gap and Natural Bridge in Torndirrup National Park.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob and Housing Minister Colin Holt, representing Regional Development Minister Terry Redman, unveiled a plaque at the new \$6.1 million redevelopment, which features two lookouts over the Southern Ocean, as well as accessible pathways, a picnic area, interpretive signage and a new car park.

The opening was the culmination of thousands of hours of work over five years by a dedicated team of Parks and Wildlife staff. It became one of the department's most ambitious projects, involving staff across interpretation, architectural and landscape design, and project coordination.

The project was funded by the State Government's Royalties for Regions program and Parks and Wildlife.

**Above** Parks and Wildlife staff join Environment Minister Albert Jacob to celebrate the unveiling of a plaque at The Gap. Left to right: Peter Hartley, Paul McCluskey, Mike Shephard, Minister Jacob, Greg Mair, Jeremy Flynn, Ben Liddelow and Dave Colyer. Front: Peter Sharp and Tracy Churchill. Photo – Heather Quinlan/Parks and Wildlife



## 2016–17 Budget released

The State Government has delivered the 2016–17 Budget. This includes \$22.1 million for Kimberley national and marine parks and \$18.2 million for the development of a skywalk and tourism infrastructure at Kalbarri National Park.

For more information visit [www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au](http://www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au).

## Campers set to experience Yanchep

Camping will be available at Yanchep National Park from July this year, as part of a trial to expand camping options in the metropolitan area.

The park is the most popular in the greater Perth region, with more than 320,000 visits each year.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the trial would help determine the demand and the type of camping facilities that campers expect in an area like Yanchep.

"There is already one small walk-in camp site in the north-western section of the park and now that option will be expanded to accommodate caravans, campervans, camper trailers and tents on Henry White Oval for up to seven days," Mr Jacob said.

"I hope many people who want to experience camping will try it at Yanchep, and be encouraged through camping to explore more of WA's wonderful environment."

Park manager Julia Coggins said it was an exciting opportunity for people to experience Yanchep's many attractions.

"Yanchep is a fantastic place to see wildlife. Koalas are easy to see from a raised boardwalk and

throughout the rest of the park visitors can see western grey kangaroos, a wide range of waterbirds, and at different times of the year large flocks of Carnaby's cockatoos," Julia said.

"Other attractions include walk trails through superb coastal woodland and wildflower areas, as well as cave tours and Aboriginal cultural experiences. Visitors can also enjoy a meal or refreshments at the historic Yanchep Inn and the award-winning Chocolate Drops Tearooms, or play some golf on our nine-hole golf course," Julia said.

The camping trial is part of the *Parks for People* initiative aimed at increasing the number of affordable camping options within the State's spectacular natural areas.

Camping fees during the trial will be \$10 a night for adults, \$6.60 for concession holders and \$2.20 for children aged 6–15 years. Children under six will be free.

**Below left** Kathleen Lowry and her sons give camping at Yanchep a go at the Great Aussie Camp Out in 2014.

**Below right** A girl gets involved in some nature play at Yanchep. Photos – Miranda Jackson/Parks and Wildlife



# Reconciliation Week 2016

National Reconciliation Week is underway for 2016, with Parks and Wildlife staff celebrating with a number of events around the State.

In Perth, about 50 staff gathered on 27 May for a barbecue breakfast and walking tour along the Swan River, visiting two recently completed interpretation facilities at Point Walter and Bicton Baths.

Part of the *River Journeys* project – which aims to encourage people to take their own journeys of cultural and spiritual discovery along Perth's rivers – the facilities include boardwalks and signs sharing stories of the connection between the Whadjuk Noongar people and the river.

Aboriginal participation and involvement manager Rhonda Murphy said the event acknowledged and celebrated Reconciliation Week in a place culturally significant to Whadjuk Noongar people.

"It highlighted the work the department has done in partnership with the Whadjuk people to establish an interpretation facility that can inform fellow Australians that Aboriginal culture is rich and ongoing – particularly in the urban setting," Rhonda said.

"That's what reconciliation is about – working together."

The event included a Welcome to Country by Whadjuk Ballardong Elder Betty Garlett, and participants had the

**Below** Riverpark project officer Ben Ansell explains new interpretation facilities at Point Walter in Bicton, developed with the input of Whadjuk Noongar elders. This area is known as *Dyoondalup*, meaning 'place of white sand', in Noongar. Photo – Miranda Jackson/Parks and Wildlife



opportunity to download the free [Geotourist app](#) to walk the *Jenna Biddi Yorga Trail*, listening to recorded audio stories of the cultural significance of the area as they walked from Point Walter to Bicton Baths.

Reconciliation Week is held each year on 27 May–3 June to celebrate and build on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. More information is available on [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au).

Other Parks and Wildlife events celebrating Reconciliation Week include a community lunch in Bunbury on Tuesday 31 May in Kaatamoordoo Kidji Maambakoort, the office's reconciliation garden.

**Below** One of the interpretation panels sharing cultural, environmental and historical information about the river. Photo – Miranda Jackson/Parks and Wildlife



## Wallabies journey from Wheatbelt to Kalbarri



**Above** Conservation officer Natasha Moore with a black-flanked rock wallaby trapped in Mt Caroline Nature Reserve ahead of the translocation. Photo – David Jolliffe/Parks and Wildlife

**Twenty-three black-flanked rock wallabies are settling into Kalbarri National Park after being moved from two Wheatbelt nature reserves.**

They joined the tiny population of the threatened species discovered in the park last year.

The species was considered locally extinct, having not been seen in the area for 20 years, until a rock climber filmed two wallabies in a gorge in the park in August 2015. The sighting was further confirmed by Parks and Wildlife staff and camera monitoring.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said this movement of rock wallabies into the Midwest region was the first of a number of planned releases of wallabies into the park by Parks and Wildlife, with the assistance of WWF Australia over the next three years.



"The wallabies from the Wheatbelt will help establish two new populations in Kalbarri National Park and supplement the small population," Mr Jacob said.

"Managing the threat of feral cats, foxes and goats will be crucial for the long-term viability of these wallabies.

"Their decline in the national park is largely due to goats competing with them for food and pushing them out of the protected gorge areas, leaving them vulnerable to predation by foxes and cats."

Under the *Western Shield* program, the park has been baited for foxes since 1996. Feral cat baiting is being implemented using the *Eradicat*® bait, which is supported by \$1.7 million in Australian Government funding for further cat control in WA.

"The department has also carried out extensive goat culling since 2006, to the extent that wallaby numbers will be able to build up again," the Minister said.

Watch a video about the translocation on the department's [Facebook page](#).

**Left** This black-flanked rock wallaby joey is the offspring of the two found in Kalbarri National Park last year. Photo – Parks and Wildlife



**Above left** Science and Conservation Director Margaret Byrne delivers the opening address. **Top middle** Some of the 120-plus professionals at the symposium. **Above right** Research scientist Ryonen Butcher. **Bottom middle** Parks and Wildlife senior research scientists Kelly Shepherd and Juliet Wege with Lyn Cook from the University of Queensland. Photos – Darryl Peroni

## Citizen scientists helping *Western Shield*

People all over the world can now get involved in *Western Shield* with the launch of an online citizen science website that allows people to identify animals captured on motion-sensing cameras.

The *Western Shield Camera Watch* site, hosted on popular volunteer research platform Zooniverse, is designed to help scientists measure the success of the department's wildlife recovery program.

Parks and Wildlife zoologist Michelle Drew said the website would help with the huge task of identifying and recording animal sightings from the images collected from 90 cameras set up on conservation lands in the northern jarrah forest.

"Comparing the numbers of sightings of cats, foxes and native wildlife in areas baited for feral animals to land areas that aren't, will help scientists measure the effectiveness of the baiting program and adjust accordingly," she said.

"The beauty of the *Western Shield Camera Watch* project is that volunteers don't need scientific knowledge, just a keen eye and a willingness to learn."

A step-by-step guide helps users correctly identify native and introduced species.

"There are more than two million registered users of Zooniverse, so there is great potential to get a wide range of people involved in and excited about protecting WA's native wildlife," Michelle said.

*Western Shield Camera Watch* is the first WA project hosted by Zooniverse.

## National symposium held in Perth

The Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre was bustling with scientists, researchers and land managers from around Australia on 10–13 May, as Parks and Wildlife co-hosted the national symposium for the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA).

The ALA is the nation's largest online biodiversity database, containing information on all of Australia's known species gathered from a wide range of data providers. It contains more than 60 million occurrence records, supplemented by additional information such as molecular data, photographs, maps, sound recordings and literature.

The four-day symposium drew more than 120 professionals representing universities, government departments, research centres, museums and land management agencies from around Australia. It featured a series of presentations, workshops and tutorials about research conducted using the ALA.

Parks and Wildlife Director of Science and Conservation Dr Margaret Byrne said the symposium showcased the importance of the ALA to a variety of science and conservation projects being undertaken in WA.

"The ALA provides access to plant and animal data across Australia which is important for facilitating biodiversity analysis by both scientists and practitioners," she said.

Among the presenters was Dr Cristina Ramalho whose work with the department included a project restoring the banks of the Warren River previously impacted by invasive European blackberry.

Cristina and colleagues used the ALA for information on the locations of five plant species and analysed how the geographic range of these plants would alter with different climate change projections, allowing them to select seeds for the rehabilitation work based on their suitability to the changing climate.

"Choosing the source of the seeds to be used in restoration projects is one of the most important steps towards the long-term success of those projects," Cristina said.

Access the Atlas of Living Australia at [www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au).



# Kimberley visitors thank staff

Above Purnululu National Park. Photo – Colin Ingram/Parks and Wildlife

Park visitors Ray and June recently took the time to write to Parks and Wildlife following a visit to the Kimberley’s spectacular Purnululu National Park, during which bad weather forced them to stay overnight in the park unprepared. They praised the work of ranger John Hayward, visitor centre officer Carmel Gilson and their colleagues.

## ***“To whom it may concern***

*On Saturday 7 May this year, my wife and I along with another female passenger drove into the Bungle Bungles. No-one could have foreseen that we were going to stay overnight due to the rain and one of the creek crossings becoming flooded.*

*I am writing this letter to congratulate your department in the way your staff managed the situation. [...] On completing our tour of the southern section of the park and early in the afternoon we arrived back at the information centre to find that the road out had been closed. On entering the centre we were informed of the reason for the road closure.*

*It was very disconcerting that we were going to be stuck for unknown amount of days until we could return to our van at the caravan park, as we had no change of clothes, food, or toiletries.*

*It was very early that I noticed the smooth management skills by both Carmel and John. It did not take long for them to calm everyone down and exude a scene of calm. I must add that by now the group of people in the same predicament numbered 12 with two very small children.*

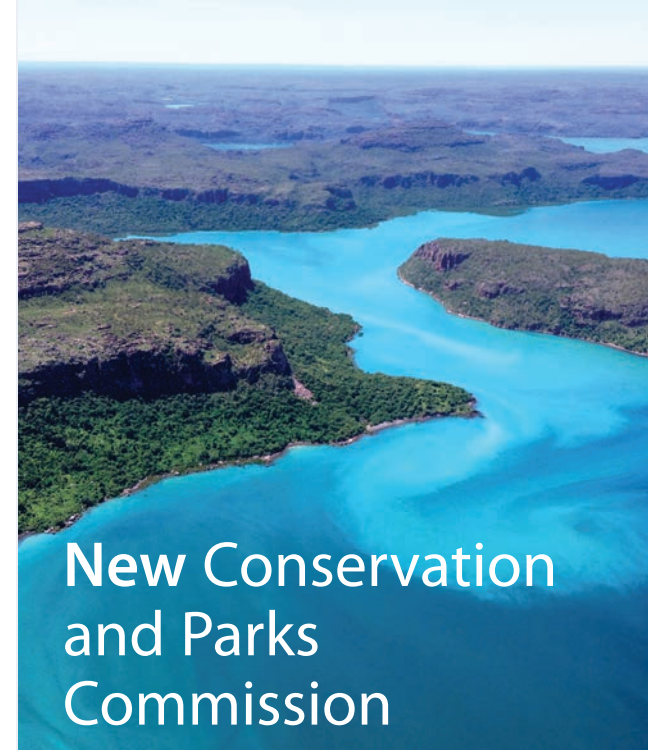
*Before very long Carmel and John had us all housed for the night and given assurances that we would be fed.*

*Carmel opened her accommodation for our use and met all our needs until we were able to leave and return to our van. All the time that we were there, John kept us well informed of what was happening with the creek. At no time did we ever feel that we were stranded without any assistance. John and Carmel went well above and beyond any expectations that we may have had.*

*On driving out of the Bungle Bungles it was easy to see why the road was closed as the conditions were very damp and muddy. We had no difficulty crossing the creeks on the way out but could see where the levels had reached. Living in North Queensland we are only too aware of the dangers flooding creeks can pose.*

*I would appreciate passing on our sincere thanks to Carmel and John for what they did for us and all the others affected by the flooding.*

*Without a doubt our experience at the Bungle Bungles with John and Carmel has given us great confidence in visiting like national parks in Western Australia.”*



# New Conservation and Parks Commission

Above Prince Frederick Harbour. Photo – Anna Smith/Parks and Wildlife

The inaugural Conservation and Parks Commission was appointed this month, signalling a new era of integrated management of WA’s lands and waters.

The new authority replaces the Conservation Commission of Western Australia and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) following changes to the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* late last year.

The Conservation and Parks Commission enables a holistic approach to planning the management of land and marine reserve areas, ensuring greater flexibility and focusing planning considerations in the one body.

Marion Fulker has been appointed as the new commission’s chairwoman with Professor Chris Doepel, the former deputy chairman of the MPRA, as the deputy chairman. The other members of the commission are Ingrid Cumming, Regina Flugge, Kim Colero, Brian Middleton and Ross Dowling.



**Above** Scarlet banksia at Normans Beach looking towards Waychinicup National Park. Photo – Libby Sandiford/Parks and Wildlife

## Albany coast plan released for comment

A plan for the future management of the Albany coast's spectacular parks and conservation reserves has been released for public comment.

The *Albany coast draft management plan 2016* covers 56 parks and reserves, totalling 32,457 hectares within the City of Albany and the shires of Plantagenet and Jerramungup. It extends along the coast and hinterland from Hay River in the west to the Pallinup River and Beaufort Inlet in the north-east, and includes nine island nature reserves. This includes the Torndirrup, West Cape Howe, Gull Rock, Waychinicup and Hassell national parks; and the Two Peoples Bay and Mount Manypeaks nature reserves.

Some of these large, intact reserves are key refuges for threatened animals including the critically endangered Gilbert's potoroo, and protect areas of high plant species diversity and threatened flora and ecological communities.

It is renowned for activities including fishing, whale watching, the internationally-recognised long distance Bibbulmun Track and breathtaking destinations such as The Gap and Natural Bridge.

The public comment period closes on 8 July 2016. View the plan at [www.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au).

## Nesting hollows installed for Carnaby's

One hundred artificial nesting hollows have been installed in trees in the Great Southern at Borden, south of Newdegate, and to the east of Lake King to provide breeding habitats for Carnaby's cockatoos.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said establishing the artificial hollows was an important part of conserving the species.

The specifically designed artificial hollows have been successful at Badgingarra and resulted in a 20 per cent increase in the number of Carnaby's cockatoo fledging once the hollows were installed.

"In fact, it has proven so successful at Badgingarra, Parks and Wildlife staff have recorded some Carnaby's choosing to nest in these specifically designed hollows over natural hollows," he said.

"I am keen to see if we can achieve similar breeding results with the nesting hollows in the Great Southern."

The artificial hollows are made from durable plastic culvert pipe and are based on measurements taken from almost 3000 natural tree hollows. The tubes are 400mm in diameter, at least 1m deep and are installed a minimum of 4m above the ground.

Parks and Wildlife works closely with BirdLife Western Australia, Landcare Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Rotary Club of Palm Beach on the project.

View a video about the artificial hollows on the department's [Facebook page](#).



**Above** A cockatoo makes use of one of the artificial hollows. Photo – Rick Dawson/Parks and Wildlife



**Above** NRM WA chairman Jim Sullivan and Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp with the signed agreement. Photo – Heather Quinlan/Parks and Wildlife

## New partnership for Land for Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife's *Land for Wildlife* conservation program has partnered with NRM WA to help participants manage their bushland for wildlife habitat.

*Land for Wildlife* is a voluntary scheme to encourage and assist private landholders to provide habitat for wildlife in bushland on their property.

Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp said the collaboration with NRM WA regional organisations would benefit private land managers and the State's biodiversity conservation.

"Parks and Wildlife has run *Land for Wildlife* since 1997 and will continue to administer the program through coordination of property assessments, registering and supporting new participants and communications including the *Western Wildlife* newsletter.

"NRM regional groups have expertise in providing land management support to landholders, community engagement and information dissemination, and considerable local knowledge about land management practices and local biodiversity conservation."

NRM WA chair Jim Sullivan said the services each NRM organisation will provide to *Land for Wildlife* members would be determined in coming months.

"It is anticipated that NRM bodies will work with landholders in each region, linking them into networks and local communications," Jim said.

For more information or to become a participant, visit [www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/landforwildlife](http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/landforwildlife).